

THE STATE



OF WYOMING

**JIM GERINGER**  
GOVERNOR

## *Public Service Commission*

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**STEVE ELLENBECKER**

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DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

**KRISTIN H. LEE**

COMMISSIONER

**STEPHEN G. OXLEY**

SECRETARY AND CHIEF  
COUNSEL

**DAVID M. MOSIER**

ADMINISTRATOR

June 11, 1997

Dear Wyoming Resident:

The Wyoming Public Service Commission is the state agency responsible for administering the Wyoming Telecommunications Act of 1995. Among other things, this Act mandates cost-based pricing for local telephone service, but it also states that: "It is the intent of this act to provide a transition from rate of return regulation of a monopolistic telecommunications industry to competitive markets and to maintain affordable essential telecommunications services through the transition period."

We therefore seek your help in gaining a better understanding of how telephone customers in Wyoming view the concept of affordability. On the back of this letter, you will find a short survey that takes about five minutes to complete. Please help us by taking this small amount of time to complete the survey and return it to us before July 15, 1997, in the postage paid envelope enclosed.

We appreciate your time and your help.

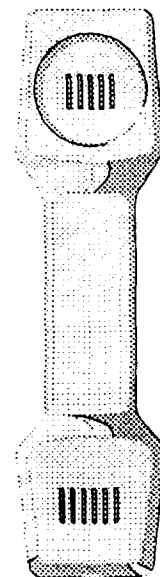
Sincerely,

**STEVE ELLENBECKER**  
Chairman

**DOUG DOUGHTY**  
Deputy Chairman

**KRISTIN H. LEE**  
Commissioner

# Appendix B: Survey



1. Do you currently have local telephone service?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. If no, why not?

☐ The installation fees and deposits were too high.

☐ I previously had local telephone service, but the bills I incurred were too large.

☐ I didn't want the access because of the ability to purchase items by phone.

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. Where in Wyoming do you live? \_\_\_\_\_

4. From your home, are you able to call hospitals, schools, and other essential services without incurring a long distance charge?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. What is your annual household income?

☐ \$0-\$15,000

☐ \$30,001-\$60,000

☐ \$15,001-\$30,000

☐ \$60,001 & over

6. What percentage (%) of your monthly budget is used for local telephone service? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What are your current monthly local telephone charges? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Please indicate with a checkmark (✓) at what monthly charge level you would **no longer** subscribe to local telephone services

☐ \$20

☐ \$35

☐ \$25

☐ \$40

☐ \$30

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

9. How important to you is local telephone service?

☐ Very important

☐ Somewhat important

☐ Not important at all

10. Number in order of your perceived level of importance the following items. (1-low; 5-high)

☐ Cable TV

☐ Household transportation

☐ Local telephone service

☐ Entertainment/Recreation activities

☐ Internet access

11. Do you see cellular service, e-mail, or the Internet as an alternative to local telephone service?

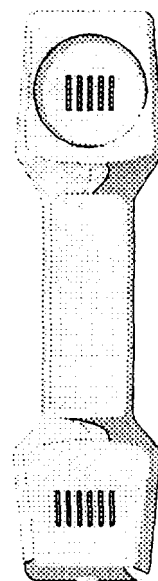
☐ Yes

☐ No

12. Please make any other comments you feel would be beneficial to the Wyoming Public Service Commission regarding local telephone service rates \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix C: Results Spreadsheets



# Region 1

1. Do you currently have telephone service?

yes	106	100.00%
no	0	0.00%

4. From your home, are you able to call hospitals, schools, and other essential services without incurring a long distance charge?

yes	103	99.04%
no	1	0.96%

5 & 8. Based on your income level, at what monthly charge would you no longer subscribe to local telephone service?

\$0-15000	\$20	0	\$15001-30000	\$20	0
	\$25	1		\$25	0
	\$30	3		\$30	7
	\$35	3		\$35	8
	\$40	4		\$40	5
	Other	2		Other	10
\$30001-60000	\$20	0	\$60001&over	\$20	0
	\$25	2		\$25	1
	\$30	3		\$30	0
	\$35	4		\$35	0
	\$40	5		\$40	2
	Other	10		Other	11

8. At what monthly charge would you no longer subscribe to local service?

\$20	0	0.00%
\$25	4	5.26%
\$30	6	7.89%
\$35	15	19.74%
\$40	16	21.05%
Other	35	46.05%

6. What percentage of your monthly budget is used for local telephone service?

1% or less	32	47.06%
2-5%	23	33.82%
over 5%	13	19.12%

7 & 8. Considering what you currently paid, how much is the difference between that amount and the charge where you would no longer subscribe? ("Other" responses are not included, nor are current charges above \$40.00)

-10 to -15		0.00%
-5 to -10		0.00%
0 to -5		0.00%
0	5	11.63%
0 to 5	20	46.51%
5 to 10	14	32.56%
10 to 15	2	4.65%
15 to 20	0	0.00%
20 to 25	2	4.65%

9. How important to you is local telephone service?

Very important	87	84.47%
Somewhat	16	15.53%
Not important	0	0.00%

# Region 1

10. Number in order of your perceived level of importance. (1-low, 5-high)

	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Cable TV	1	21	21	
	2	14	28	
	3	33	99	
	4	23	92	
	5	8	40	
Total			280	19.31%
	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Local phone	1	15	15	
	2	26	52	
	3	11	33	
	4	23	92	
	5	30	150	
Total			342	23.59%
	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Internet	1	39	39	
	2	8	16	
	3	7	21	
	4	9	36	
	5	23	115	
Total			227	15.66%
	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Transportation	1	33	33	
	2	6	12	
	3	6	18	
	4	12	48	
	5	42	210	
Total			321	22.14%
	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Enter/Rec.	1	10	10	
	2	22	44	
	3	38	114	
	4	18	72	
	5	8	40	
Total			280	19.31%

11. Do you see cellular service, e-mail, or the Internet as an alternative to local telephone service?

yes	44	42.31%
no	60	57.69%

## Region 2

1. Do you currently have telephone service?

yes	88	97.78%
no	2	2.22%

4. From your home, are you able to call hospitals, schools, and other essential services without incurring a long distance charge?

yes	84	92.31%
no	7	7.69%

5 & 8. Based on your income level, at what monthly charge would you no longer subscribe to local telephone service?

\$0-15000	\$20	1	\$15001-30000	\$20	3
	\$25	6		\$25	5
	\$30	5		\$30	4
	\$35	2		\$35	1
	\$40	2		\$40	3
	Other	2		Other	4
\$30001-60000	\$20	0	\$60001&over	\$20	0
	\$25	1		\$25	0
	\$30	7		\$30	0
	\$35	4		\$35	0
	\$40	7		\$40	0
	Other	8		Other	6

8. At what monthly charge would you no longer subscribe to local service?

\$20	4	5.48%
\$25	12	16.44%
\$30	18	24.66%
\$35	7	9.59%
\$40	12	16.44%
Other	20	27.40%

6. What percentage of your monthly budget is used for local telephone service?

1% or less	15	28.85%
2-5%	28	53.85%
over 5%	9	17.31%

7 & 8. Considering what you currently paid, how much is the difference between that amount and the charge where you would no longer subscribe? ("Other" responses are not included, nor are current charges above \$40.00)

-10 to -15		0.00%
-5 to -10		0.00%
0 to -5	1	2.13%
0	1	2.13%
0 to 5	17	36.17%
5 to 10	21	44.68%
10 to 15	7	14.89%
15 to 20	0	0.00%
20 to 25	0	0.00%

9. How important to you is local telephone service?

Very important	77	85.56%
Somewhat	12	13.33%
Not important	1	1.11%

## Region 2

10. Number in order of your perceived level of importance. (1-low, 5-high)

	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Cable TV	1	14	14	
	2	16	32	
	3	36	108	
	4	12	48	
	5	7	35	
Total			237	18.22%
	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Local phone	1	10	10	
	2	17	34	
	3	14	42	
	4	17	68	
	5	28	140	
Total			294	22.60%
	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Internet	1	29	29	
	2	11	22	
	3	4	12	
	4	4	16	
	5	29	145	
Total			224	17.22%
	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Transportation	1	24	24	
	2	5	10	
	3	2	6	
	4	9	36	
	5	45	225	
Total			301	23.14%
	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Enter/Rec.	1	8	8	
	2	23	46	
	3	23	69	
	4	23	92	
	5	6	30	
Total			245	18.83%

11. Do you see cellular service, e-mail, or the Internet as an alternative to local telephone service?

yes	30	32.97%
no	61	67.03%



# Region 3

1. Do you currently have telephone service?

yes	147	99.32%
no	1	0.68%

4. From your home, are you able to call hospitals, schools, and other essential services without incurring a long distance charge?

yes	145	98.64%
no	2	1.36%

5 & 8. Based on your income level, at what monthly charge would you no longer subscribe to local telephone service?

\$0-15000	\$20	2	\$15001-30000	\$20	1
	\$25	2		\$25	0
	\$30	6		\$30	10
	\$35	4		\$35	2
	\$40	3		\$40	8
	Other	2		Other	10
\$30001-60000	\$20	2	\$60001&over	\$20	0
	\$25	2		\$25	2
	\$30	5		\$30	3
	\$35	7		\$35	2
	\$40	7		\$40	5
	Other	18		Other	9

8. At what monthly charge would you no longer subscribe to local service?

\$20	5	4.24%
\$25	6	5.08%
\$30	24	20.34%
\$35	16	13.56%
\$40	25	21.19%
Other	42	35.59%

6. What percentage of your monthly budget is used for local telephone service?

1% or less	37	40.22%
2-5%	43	46.74%
over 5%	12	13.04%

7 & 8. Considering what you currently paid, how much is the difference between that amount and the charge where you would no longer subscribe? ("Other" responses are not included, nor are current charges above \$40.00)

-10 to -15	1	1.61%
-5 to -10	3	4.84%
0 to -5	1	1.61%
0	7	11.29%
0 to 5	19	30.65%
5 to 10	23	37.10%
10 to 15	6	9.68%
15 to 20	1	1.61%
20 to 25	1	1.61%

9. How important to you is local telephone service?

Very important	116	78.91%
Somewhat	26	17.69%
Not important	5	3.40%

# Region 3

10. Number in order of your perceived level of importance. (1-low, 5-high)

	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Cable TV	1	12	12	
	2	36	72	
	3	47	141	
	4	24	96	
	5	18	90	
Total			411	19.66%
	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Local phone	1	20	20	
	2	23	46	
	3	21	63	
	4	38	152	
	5	41	205	
Total			486	23.24%
	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Internet	1	68	68	
	2	6	12	
	3	13	39	
	4	7	28	
	5	31	155	
Total			302	14.44%
	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Transportation	1	33	33	
	2	12	24	
	3	7	21	
	4	22	88	
	5	65	325	
Total			491	23.48%
	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Enter/Rec.	1	15	15	
	2	33	66	
	3	41	123	
	4	33	132	
	5	13	65	
Total			401	19.18%

11. Do you see cellular service, e-mail, or the Internet as an alternative to local telephone service?

yes	47	32.19%
no	99	67.81%

# Statewide

1. Do you currently have telephone service?

yes	348	98.86%
no	4	1.14%

4. From your home, are you able to call hospitals, schools, and other essential services without incurring a long distance charge?

yes	340	97.14%
no	10	2.86%

5 & 8. Based on your income level, at what monthly charge would you no longer subscribe to local telephone service?

\$0-15000	\$20	3	\$15001-30000	\$20	5
	\$25	9		\$25	6
	\$30	15		\$30	21
	\$35	9		\$35	11
	\$40	11		\$40	16
	Other	6		Other	24
\$30001-60000	\$20	2	\$60001&over	\$20	0
	\$25	5		\$25	3
	\$30	15		\$30	3
	\$35	15		\$35	2
	\$40	19		\$40	7
	Other	36		Other	27

8. At what monthly charge would you no longer subscribe to local service?

\$20	10	3.66%
\$25	23	8.42%
\$30	49	17.95%
\$35	38	13.92%
\$40	55	20.15%
Other	98	35.90%

6. What percentage of your monthly budget is used for local telephone service?

1% or less	85	39.53%
2-5%	94	43.72%
over 5%	36	16.74%

7 & 8. Considering what you currently paid, how much is the difference between that amount and the charge where you would no longer subscribe? ("Other" responses are not included, nor are current charges above \$40.00)

-10 to -15	1	0.64%
-5 to -10	3	1.91%
0 to -5	3	1.91%
0	14	8.92%
0 to 5	56	35.67%
5 to 10	60	38.22%
10 to 15	15	9.55%
15 to 20	2	1.27%
20 to 25	3	1.91%

9. How important to you is local telephone service?

Very important	288	82.76%
Somewhat	54	15.52%
Not important	6	1.72%

# Statewide

10. Number in order of your perceived level of importance. (1-low, 5-high)

	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Cable TV	1	48	48	
	2	67	134	
	3	119	357	
	4	60	240	
	5	34	170	
Total			949	19.19%

	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Local phone	1	46	46	
	2	67	134	
	3	46	138	
	4	81	324	
	5	101	505	
Total			1147	23.20%

	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Internet	1	139	139	
	2	27	54	
	3	24	72	
	4	20	80	
	5	85	425	
Total			770	15.57%

	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Transportation	1	92	92	
	2	24	48	
	3	15	45	
	4	44	176	
	5	155	775	
Total			1136	22.97%

	Score	No.	Weighted Score	
Enter/Rec.	1	36	36	
	2	78	156	
	3	104	312	
	4	76	304	
	5	27	135	
Total			943	19.07%

11. Do you see cellular service, e-mail, or the Internet as an alternative to local telephone service?

yes	124	35.53%
no	225	64.47%

# Comparative

1. Do you currently have telephone service?

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Statewide
yes	100%	98%	99%	99%
no	0%	2%	1%	1%

4. From your home, are you able to call hospitals, schools, and other essential services without incurring a long distance charge?

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Statewide
yes	99%	92%	99%	97%
no	1%	8%	1%	3%

5 & 8. Based on your income level, at what monthly charge would you no longer subscribe to local telephone service?

		Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Statewide
\$0-15000	\$20	0	1	2	3
	\$25	1	6	2	9
	\$30	3	5	6	15
	\$35	3	2	4	9
	\$40	4	2	3	11
	Other	2	2	2	6
\$15001-30000	\$20	0	3	1	5
	\$25	0	5	0	6
	\$30	7	4	10	21
	\$35	8	1	2	11
	\$40	5	3	8	16
	Other	10	4	10	24
\$30001-60000	\$20	0	0	2	2
	\$25	2	1	2	5
	\$30	3	7	5	15
	\$35	4	4	7	15
	\$40	5	7	7	19
	Other	10	8	18	36
\$60001&over	\$20	0	0	0	0
	\$25	1	0	2	3
	\$30	0	0	3	3
	\$35	0	0	2	2
	\$40	2	0	5	7
	Other	11	6	9	27

8. At what monthly charge would you no longer subscribe to local service?

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Statewide
\$20	0%	5%	4%	4%
\$25	5%	16%	5%	8%
\$30	8%	25%	20%	18%
\$35	20%	10%	14%	14%
\$40	21%	16%	21%	20%
Other	46%	27%	36%	36%

6. What percentage of your monthly budget is used for local telephone service?

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Statewide
1% or less	47%	29%	40%	40%
2-5%	34%	54%	47%	44%
over 5%	19%	17%	13%	17%

# Comparative

7 & 8. Considering what you currently paid, how much is the difference between that amount and the charge where you would no longer subscribe? ("Other" responses are not included, nor are current charges above \$40.00)

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Statewide
-10 to -15	0%	0%	2%	1%
-5 to -10	0%	0%	5%	2%
0 to -5	0%	2%	2%	2%
0	12%	2%	11%	9%
0 to 5	47%	36%	31%	36%
5 to 10	33%	45%	37%	38%
10 to 15	5%	15%	10%	10%
15 to 20	0%	0%	2%	1%
20 to 25	5%	0%	2%	2%

9. How important to you is local telephone service?

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Statewide
Very important	84%	86%	79%	83%
Somewhat	16%	13%	18%	16%
Not important	0%	1%	3%	2%

10. Number in order of your perceived level of importance. (1-low, 5-high)

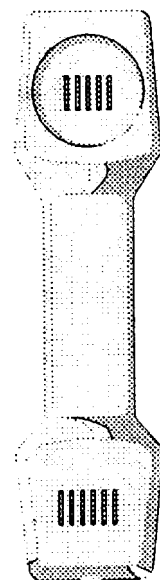
	Score	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Statewide
Cable TV	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	Total Score	19%	18%	20%	19%
Local phone	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	Total Score	24%	23%	23%	23%
Internet	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	Total Score	16%	17%	14%	16%
Transportation	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	Total Score	22%	23%	23%	23%
Enter/Rec.	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	Total	19%	19%	19%	19%

# Comparative

11. Do you see cellular service, e-mail, or the Internet as an alternative to local telephone service?

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Statewide
yes	42%	33%	32%	36%
no	58%	67%	68%	64%

# Appendix D: Public Comments





### Public Comments:

Please make any other comments you feel would be beneficial to the Wyoming Public Service Commission regarding local telephone service rates

#### Casper

- ▶ People in Wyoming cannot afford these higher rates, until they do something with wages.
- ▶ People can't afford all these rate hikes. It's time for these companies to live in a budget like every one else.
- ▶ I use phone average of 30 times a month (18 calls coming in - 12 out), about \$1.00 every time used. Costly. Very rare long distance, except to V.A. Sheridan Hospital. (WWII vet). T.V. and phone increases all the time--out of line.
- ▶ A cafeteria-style selection of additional services rather than a "here it is--take it or leave it" type of service would interest me with a mere affordable rate for individually selected items. The package deals presently available contain at least 2 items I do not want or use.
- ▶ If cellular gets cheaper then that would be the way to go.
- ▶ Thank you for the work you do for us.
- ▶ I feel \$25 to 35 is a reasonable amount to pay for local service.
- ▶ Telephones are very important to us-but in later years and fixed income-rising charges on needed things make problems for we seniors-with no thought to discounts. Even enjoyment to TV is hard with their monthly rates. Our monies don't increase.
- ▶ These are too high now. Please do not raise rates now. As a public school teacher, I have not been able to keep up with the cost of living.
- ▶ I think we had better service at better prices when we had one regulated phone company.
- ▶ We are seniors and feel the rates are high enough now on our limited budget.
- ▶ The rates are high enough now.
- ▶ As a senior citizen I moved to a house better suited to my needs, but I kept the other house because I had a huge amount of materials I had accumulated as I served children as a speech pathologist for over forty years. US West said I could have the same number at

both houses until I had the time and energy to move out completely. (I felt it was not safe to be in the house without service.) They said "fine" and charged me an extra \$7+ until recently when they more than doubled my cost. I had no alternative and I am unhappy about it.

- ▶ On a fixed income like we have, as retired people, phone service is very high priced.
- ▶ Please keep it affordable for all incomes
- ▶ We are retired on fixed income-find that inflation is impossible to keep up with. A phone is a necessity, but not so heavily used
- ▶ All utilities are high. They get raises while working people are cut back or lose their jobs.
- ▶ Deregulation in the local phone service arena will result in higher bills just like long distance did.
- ▶ Installation fees are too high, but it does help that they are able to break it into payments. Breaking the installation into payments was the only [thing] that encouraged us to get a phone, when we were just starting out and couldn't afford it.
- ▶ Not everyone has a cell phone or computer. I know a lot of people who don't have a phone because the deposit is too high.
- ▶ This is still the cheapest utility we have.
- ▶ Local phone service is a necessity. People will pay a lot for it. The rate should allow the phone company a reasonable return and be set as low as possible cost to the user.
- ▶ I feel phone companies should be capped at a 5-10% profit.
- ▶ I just don't know where people will be able to keep paying more and more for basic service. There is a saturation point people reach when they can just no longer afford things and that's the point most people won't pay at all. They will just refuse to pay at all.
- ▶ The only reason I have a telephone is for emergencies, and the phone company uses that to increase rates.
- ▶ The argument for (continual) rate increases is that we need to pay for extending service to outlying areas. The infrastructure is already in place--why are we being asked to pay relatively large increases to extend service to a handful of customers? Those charges are

never removed after the extensions are paid for, are they?

- ▶ We pay enough for basic telephone services along with all these taxes added to the bill. I don't feel the rate raise is justified at all.
- ▶ People on fixed incomes cannot afford 24% increases when we receive on[ly] 2.8% increases in our incomes.
- ▶ Please no raise in rates!
- ▶ The local and long distance phone bills are so "unbundled" you get many small charges you perceive as small but when put together gets expensive. It's an attempt to put the public to sleep. The long distance bill is also part of the phone bill and I don't generally separate out the local vs. the long distance. It [is] all just a large monthly bill. Tell Alan Greenspan there is inflation because prices keep going up.
- ▶ Something has to stop somewhere, it might as well be this.
- ▶ Need more competition as US West (worst) currently has monopoly.
- ▶ They are on the edge of being too expensive
- ▶ Please don't raise them!
- ▶ Local & long distance just seem to keep going up & no real extra benefits/new services in return.
- ▶ Currently my local service is charging about \$130.00 to \$178.00/month. Among the fees are a \$20.00 charge for the line. In addition any option added costs more.

### Cheyenne

- ▶ I feel a raise in rates will be detrimental to low income families.
- ▶ Get rid of the after 5 p.m. pests.
- ▶ \$35.00 for basic service before a single call is made is boarder line. . . I really don't need a phone if the pricing continues to go up.
- ▶ With all the competition for long distance service it seems there is very little local competition which might not lower prices but may keep them from raising in the future.
- ▶ I live alone, am 90 years old, and have no experience with computers, etc. I would be

absolutely lost in e-mail and internet. My telephone is my link to the outside world.

- ▶ Rates O.K. if raised only 2-5% at a time
- ▶ I think rates are really too high right now for something as essential as local telephone service. It's something you just about have to have so I pay for it. Cable T.V. is too high so I do not subscribe to it. This may occur with phone service if it goes higher also.
- ▶ I think the rate for basic service is way too high. I do not have any other expanded service and my bill is still around \$30.00
- ▶ Local phone bills should not be a method of taxing. ie. 911 fund, low income assistance, etc.
- ▶ The telephone is my means of communication as all my family live out-of-state.
- ▶ The basic rates are pretty high so I have to limit long distance calls.
- ▶ Quit having telemarketers from each company trying to get your business. It is both annoying and I am sure it costs the company a lot of money.
- ▶ The telephone is a nuisance at times when we are harassed by telemarketers. We have caller ID, so we do not answer any unwanted telephone calls. We have considered not having a telephone for this reason.
- ▶ Rates continue to increase without parallel increases in service though the reason provided for the increases are generally high tech investments in infrastructure. Rates are low elsewhere with more and better services available.
- ▶ I believe its too high.
- ▶ I need a telephone for medical purposes. I am a cardiac. I don't think the information I provide will be of any value. It appears money and power-one follows the other-prevails and I have neither.
- ▶ We feel getting on Internet should cost more as people tie up phones using it and we suffer because of their low cost and our phone calls so expensive.
- ▶ If other companies will be able to compete with the current business, I believe it will help lowering the prices, just by the virtue of competition.
- ▶ I do not think one should be charged for installation when moving if you've had phone service either in state or out-of-state.

- ▶ Telephone rates should not go up as living on fixed income.
- ▶ I feel the resident line rates should stay about the same rate. People who can afford computers, fax machines, etc. should pay for the privilege of using the telephone lines that they tie up for long periods of time. Government and Businesses can raise money to cover these added costs easier than folks on a fixed income.
- ▶ I have to have a phone so I can be called to work, but ours is way too high. I believe our service is about double what it should be. 911 etc. cost extra. B.S. on top of all these charges it [is] very unreliable. So many different taxes added on a \$29.95 bill ends up at \$50+ without long distance. Very displeased
- ▶ By using e-mail or the Internet as our local telephone service option, those of us without a computer wouldn't get any services.
- ▶ We have often thought how much more we will be able to afford telephone service and how we will get along without it.
- ▶ Keep them at below present monthly amount if possible.
- ▶ I think they are very high. I hate to think that they will go higher.
- ▶ Quit giving increases every time they ask. Make them justify & prove need for increases, such phoney stories that you people buy into is crap. You are not a regulatory agency in any sense of the word. You see to it that the rich get richer and the poor remain poor. Get out of bed with US West.
- ▶ Forget the rates, I would just like more reliable phone service. Our phones "blow out" every time we have a storm. That is not acceptable service for \$35.00/month. (25 miles west of Cheyenne)
- ▶ US West made an agreement with the Governor, if he approved their rate restructuring they would curtail future rate hikes. Before the ink could dry they requested a rate increase. Now they are apparently requesting another increase. Hold them to their agreement for a minimum of 5 years!
- ▶ I don't see anything in this survey related to service or maintenance. In fact I'm surprised I took the time to fill it out.
- ▶ With modern conveniences such as the Home Receptionist Telephone System, the services available should not be charged at sky high rates.

- ▶ We don't understand why all local services are going up way over 5% when government says cost-of-living is under 3%. We are retired seniors on fixed income, except for Social Security, which has not increased even 3% annually recently. We are losing to actual inflation even if it is denied. How can you help this large group of citizens?
- ▶ As long as we can afford it, we would be willing to pay a little more. In case of an emergency a telephone is considered essential.
- ▶ We're seniors and need [phone service] to call hospital, doctors, family, etc. so we don't have to get in the car to run to do business. Phones help cut down gas usage. I think rates should be average as most people are middle class, low income and seniors. We all need phone service as much as food and transportation for being able to communicate with having to run and cost us more for gas, etc.
- ▶ I do not understand why we are paying more than people who live in town, because we have the least amount of service. Many times our phone doesn't work through no fault of our own, but yet we get hammered for whatever cost is incurred. (Lives between Cheyenne and Laramie.)
- ▶ Please no more surcharges for the sick, lame or cripples. They don't need telephones--please think of your grandparents. They lived and died without an instrument sticking out of their ear(s). (So can we!)
- ▶ I do feel the basic rate on phone service is getting too high. They have plenty of other services to collect more money. I do believe people on a fixed income will soon be unable to have a phone.
- ▶ We feel \$19.09 for a telephone line is rather exorbitant, especially compared to other parts of the country
- ▶ It is something we have to have but would like it to be same as it is now. Retirees on fixed incomes find it hard to pay for constant increases in services.
- ▶ Rates too high!
- ▶ Phone service is an absolute necessity. I am 62 and need crutches to get around. I cannot be without a phone.

#### Cody

- ▶ Too high for a monthly charge.
- ▶ Good as can be expected--but high.

- ▶ Basic rate per month should be no more than \$15/20, compare US West to other companies and you'll see we the consumer is being ripped off!
- ▶ \$49.00 per month just to have a phone seems unreasonable to me but we pay more, they tell us, because of the distance [we live] from Cody. I would think \$30.00 per month would be adequate.
- ▶ Were it not for the fact that I have to field calls from salespeople and solicitations for various charities, etc, I would check a higher price on [question] #8. [The monthly charge you would no longer subscribe to local phone service.]
- ▶ \$3.50/month for Federal Access is too high. Federal Excise Tax and State Tax should *not be charged on services* (total \$1.42/month), only on materials, *not on services*.
- ▶ Any increase in present rates would be very unfair to the users in Wyoming.
- ▶ When the Federal Government made AT&T and Bell system split that's when things began to increase in price. In the late 1970's my phone bill including use of their phone was approx \$12.00. Now at same residence it is approx \$25.00 using my phone. I pay a phone line maintenance fee every month. I have never had any maintenance done in the 20 years I've lived here! After you pay for basic service (increased) and all the other little charges you have a larger phone bill. I and other people in Cody have our phones ring and have no on one the line when we answer.
- ▶ We are a retired couple and feel local telephone charges for service should be ample and not any higher. Really do not wish to change from US West Comm.
- ▶ Too high for the service we get. I had to wait over 9 months to get a phone when service had been in the house a month prior. The lines are not clear--.
- ▶ Our distance (15 miles) seems to increase our rates substantially. Why are our long distance rates so much higher than surrounding states. Utah for instance.

#### Douglas

- ▶ Deregulation will only INCREASE rates.
- ▶ Older people trying to live on Social Security have all they can do to pay at the present time. In this case the Lifeline connected through telephone is vital.
- ▶ Without business, local phone service is vital. For others it is important for emergencies, information, and general communication. For those of us who do not have e-mail and/or Internet, we will use our cellular phones if the local costs get too high. As with cable TV

rates--if the phone bill gets too high, people will find other ways to communicate and be entertained.

- ▶ Why do they have to be so high?
- ▶ Local phone service is of vital importance for public safety, business and convenience and rates should remain as low as possible to insure *affordable* service for *all* income levels.
- ▶ Please stop the cycle of raising prices for our utilities. Enough is enough! People on fixed income barely make it now. The phone companies have not done anything for the people of Wyoming. *Stop the insanity now!!!*
- ▶ US West is currently too high on their basic monthly charge.
- ▶ We built our house, my husband put in the phone wire right to the house--phone service was already on the lot and we still had to pay \$375.00 to US West to get service. We refused for several months until our daughter had an emergency and could not reach us. During those months we used the cell phone. US West has no competition and this makes them uncaring about customers.
- ▶ I hope that the rates don't go any higher. It's a service everyone needs so I hope it will stay affordable.
- ▶ Why should the rates continue to go up? Why?
- ▶ [We should be] able to call Casper without a long distance charge.
- ▶ Local calls from Douglas should include Casper at no charge.
- ▶ Highest rates we've paid anywhere in the U.S

### Greybull

- ▶ Be able to access any long distance competition for in state calls and to have Internet access without extra costs.
- ▶ We have a very small area we can call toll free and both towns have less than 2,000 population--which isn't much beyond social calling. Most medical and business calls are toll calls. They really have us by the throat.
- ▶ Just keep it running smoothly, so when it's needed we'll have it to access.



- ▶ Would like to have Internet access without extra charge. [Would like] to have choice of long distance (in state) service.

#### Lander

- ▶ People (such as me) on fixed incomes cannot afford all these raises. I cannot see lowering long distance rates and raising the regular rates to compensate.
- ▶ I liked the entire phone system (local & long distance) when it was a monopoly. It sure made it easier, and cheaper to know who was responsible for what--in wire maintenance, etc.
- ▶ Keep them down, we are already paying far too much. In state calls should be less also, they are far more than state to state calls. Keep in mind that Wyoming is so rural--"local" telephone service is a misnomer. Most calls are not local.
- ▶ If the monthly cost increases it's possibly required to search for something less expensive. Each year the cost of having a telephone has increased in monthly cost. Retired income does not. Service has not been good when I moved.
- ▶ I don't like helping to pay other people's bills or the hearing impaired. We should be allowed to turn down charges on bill for 911--but don't mind paying this because it could help me or mine sometime. Thank you.
- ▶ Keep local rates within a reasonable area for retired persons and lower income persons.
- ▶ I would like to see affordable monthly service. Low to middle income families can't afford now. U.S.A. seems to be going towards 3<sup>rd</sup> world country status--only high pay jobs (people in) can afford anything. We shouldn't be forced to have home computers or Internet.
- ▶ Cellular is now offering better rates.

#### Laramie

- ▶ People like me who are disabled and trying to live on \$500.00 per month shouldn't have to make choices of going without phone service or paying for gas or electric. In other words, your rates are too damned high!
- ▶ Would not want to see local rate too high for low income/elderly people to afford. It is necessary for survival in many instances.
- ▶ I think that the rates now are about at the limit which should be charged. Much more, and a cellular phone would be better.